



New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

NEWS

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BPU APPROVES 2-1-1 PILOT PROGRAM FOR IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICE INFORMATION

NEWARK, NJ-October 3, 2002 - The Board of Public Utilities today granted use and administration of the Dialing Code 2-1-1 to the New Jersey 2-1-1 Partnership. The 2-1-1 pilot program will operate in four counties over the next few months. By dialing 2-1-1 the general public can immediately access social service information such as food, shelter, health care and counseling without having the name of a specific social service organization.

"I want to thank the Partnership for making the 2-1-1 Program in New Jersey a reality. Social service organizations provide essential and sometimes urgent information to people in need of service," said Jeanne M. Fox, President of the Board of Public Utilities. "By approving the 2-1-1 program, the Board has created one-stop shopping for social service information that is quick and simple to access."

The New Jersey 2-1-1 Partnership represents an alliance of providers of information and referral services who joined together to design and implement a comprehensive statewide plan so that every New Jersey resident has immediate access to health and human services information. The 2-1-1 Partnership will serve as the coordinating body for implementation of the 2-1-1 Program.

Commissioner Frederick F. Butler said, "I commend the 2-1-1 Partnership for their leadership on this program. It will become a useful tool for New Jersey residents in need of social service information."

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The pilot program is expected to be available in Morris/Passaic Counties and Camden County by January 2003. Morris and Passaic Counties will have a joint center administered by First Call for Help. The Camden 2-1-1 Program will be administered by the Union Organization for Social Services. Residents of Hunterdon County will be able to use 2-1-1 later this month. The Hunterdon program will be administered by Hunterdon Help line. All programs will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Commissioner Carol J. Murphy said, "Accurate and easy access to social services information all day, every day, will be readily available to those in need throughout the state with the implementation of the New Jersey 2-1-1 Program. Individuals with multiple social service needs will be able to coordinate them more easily simply by dialing 2-1-1.

When fully implemented, the 2-1-1 services with its easy to remember phone number will be available throughout New Jersey to assess individual and family needs and direct them to the necessary resources. In addition, the 2-1-1 system will act as a repository of information on all disaster efforts for the benefit of the public and service providers. The 2-1-1 Program is expected to be available statewide by 2005.

Commissioner Connie O. Hughes said, "This is another good use of technology to bring information to people in need. The 2-1-1 Program must be in place sooner than later."

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate, and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by the BPU include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about the Board of Public Utilities, visit our web site at www.bpu.state.nj.us.

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